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MINNESOTA DEPARTMENT OF COMMERCE  
ENVIRONMENTAL FACILITY PERMITTING UNIT  
FOR THE PUBLIC UTILITIES COMMISSION

In the Matter of the Application of Xcel Energy and Great  
River Energy for a Route Permit for the Upgrade of the  
Southwest Twin Cities Chaska Area 69 kV Transmission Line  
to 115 kV Capacity

MPUC DOCKET NO. E002/TL-12-401

Chaska City Hall  
Council Chambers  
One City Hall Plaza  
Chaska, Minnesota

Met, pursuant to notice, at 6:00 in the  
evening on September 26, 2012.

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1                   MR. STORM: Okay. We should probably  
2 start. Looks like we've got a light turnout  
3 tonight, but that's okay.

4                   My name is Bill Storm. I work for the  
5 Department of Commerce Energy Facility Permitting  
6 Unit. The reason we're meeting here tonight is Xcel  
7 Energy and Great River Energy have submitted two  
8 applications to the Public Utility Commission for  
9 the Southwest Twin City Chaska line. It's a rebuild  
10 line of an existing 69, and they would like to  
11 rebuild it to 115 capability.

12                  The Department of Commerce Energy  
13 Facility Permitting Unit, which I'm a member of, we  
14 facilitate the process for the Public Utilities  
15 Commission, the five-member Public Utilities  
16 Commission who are the ultimate decision makers in  
17 this venue, these dockets.

18                  With us is Mike Kaluzniak. He is on  
19 staff at the Public Utilities Commission. He is  
20 also the public advisor for this project, and his  
21 contact information is included in the notice that's  
22 on the table there.

23                  As I said, we are here to do the first  
24 meeting for these -- this project. There are two  
25 dockets associated with this project. There's a

1 certificate of -- cert -- certificate of need docket  
2 and a routing docket. In the certificate of need  
3 docket, the utilities must show to the Public  
4 Utility Commission that, one, there's a need, and  
5 that the solution to that need is a rebuild of the  
6 existing 69 line.

7 The second docket is a routing docket.  
8 And that docket's function is to determine, if  
9 indeed the need is granted by the PUC and if indeed  
10 rebuilding a transmission line is the way that the  
11 PUC would like them to meet that need, where does  
12 that line go? Currently right now, the Applicant,  
13 their preferred project is to rebuild the line in  
14 the existing place where the 69 line is.

15 We do have representatives from Xcel  
16 Energy, Sage Tauber.

17 MS. TAUBER: Yes.

18 MR. STORM: I don't know why I -- Tauber  
19 will be giving a short presentation on the project,  
20 and she will introduce the other members of Xcel.

21 Before I get into that, though, I'd just  
22 like to go over a few things. On the table there  
23 are some handouts, some information you might find  
24 useful. One is a fact sheet on easements and  
25 right-of-way and how that's handled on high voltage

1 transmission line projects.

2 There is a copy of my slides and Xcel's  
3 slides, the presentation I'll be giving tonight, so  
4 that you can jot your comments down and your  
5 questions down there as they go through them. I ask  
6 that you hold your questions till the end of the  
7 presentation.

8 There's a copy of the notice that was  
9 submitted, that was published and mailed for this  
10 meeting. There is some general information about  
11 the project and about the process in this notice, as  
12 well as some contact information on the back.

13 There's a stack of my business cards  
14 there. So if you need to contact me, you can pick  
15 up one of my cards and contact me. There's also a  
16 stack of Mike Kaluzniak's business cards there. So  
17 if you have a question about the process, in his  
18 role as public advisor, he can assist you with that.

19 There's a signup sheet. If you -- if you  
20 want to keep getting notices of documents and of  
21 meetings or hearings, I ask that you fill out your  
22 name and address on the project contact sheet so I  
23 can put you on my list to make sure that you get  
24 those notices.

25 The other thing that's up there is the

1 draft scoping document. We're here tonight for a  
2 couple of reasons. One reason is to tell the public  
3 about the proposed project. The second reason is to  
4 tell the public about the process. And the third  
5 reason is both of these dockets, the need docket and  
6 the routing docket, will require an environmental  
7 review. I'm the person responsible for writing that  
8 environmental review, and this is my draft scope of  
9 what should be in that environmental review. So  
10 this document will walk you through what scoping is  
11 all about, and it will also show you a table of  
12 contents, which is what I believe should be in the  
13 document.

14 When I speak about scoping, what I'm  
15 looking to get from the public in helping me write  
16 my environmental document is tell me the issues that  
17 are important to you, you want to make sure I cover  
18 in the document, and also this is your opportunity  
19 to put an alternative route on the table. Because  
20 we are -- I'll go into this in a little bit more  
21 detail. But because we are doing the alternative  
22 process, which is a streamlined process, given the  
23 length and nature of this line, the Applicant only  
24 has to provide one route, and the one they have  
25 chosen or proposed is to follow the 69 line. If you

1 believe there is an alternative that is better, this  
2 is your opportunity to speak up and ask me to  
3 evaluate that alternative in my environmental  
4 document.

5 You have until October 12th to submit  
6 your comments to me, either through email or snail  
7 mail. Just get your comments to me on issues or  
8 routes that you would like me to cover.

9 I will turn it -- I will turn the floor  
10 over to Xcel and GRE's representatives so they can  
11 present what their project is, what their proposal  
12 is. They'll run through some short slides  
13 describing that to you. And then they will turn it  
14 back to me, and I will walk you through the process  
15 of -- the regulatory process of how the PUC reviews  
16 the need documents and the routing documents and how  
17 a decision is rendered. And then after that, it  
18 will be the opportunity for you to speak.

19 I do have a court reporter here. So I  
20 ask if you do want to speak on the record, ask a  
21 question or put forth an issue or an alternative  
22 that you want evaluated, please stand, state and  
23 spell your name, and then speak loudly and precisely  
24 so the court reporter can get your information down.

25 With that I'm going to turn it over to

1 Sage to give the presentation from the Applicants'  
2 point of view, and then it will come back to me for  
3 the process.

4 Sage.

5 MS. TAUBER: Good evening, everyone.  
6 Thanks for coming. My name is Sage Tauber. I'm  
7 with Xcel Energy. I'm the permit analyst working on  
8 this project. And as Bill mentioned, Xcel Energy,  
9 in conjunction with Great River Energy, has  
10 submitted a permit application for a permit for this  
11 project, upgrading the Chaska area 69 kV  
12 transmission line to 115 kilovolt.

13 I'd like to start out just describing a  
14 general overview of the project. I'll explain the  
15 various components of the project here generally,  
16 and then the next slide will describe where those  
17 are located on the map.

18 I'll then introduce Paul Lehman, our  
19 regulatory manager with Xcel Energy, who will talk a  
20 little bit more for the need for the project and  
21 explain why we need these various upgrades.

22 So the overall project route covers just  
23 under 13 miles. There are various components, the  
24 first of which covers approximately 6 miles, which  
25 involves upgrading the existing 69 kV line to 115 kV



1           or -- again, kV is kilovolt.

2                       The second component of the project  
3 involves an approximately three-mile segment, which  
4 simply involves changing the operating voltage from  
5 its current voltage of 69 kV to 115 kV. This is the  
6 portion of the project that is owned and operated by  
7 Great River Energy.

8                       There will be no physical changes to this  
9 portion of the project in terms of existing poles or  
10 wires. It's currently built to 115 kV capacity. It  
11 just requires switching out a switch structure at  
12 the intersection, which I'll show you on the map in  
13 the next slide.

14                      The third component of the project  
15 involves approximately two-and-a-half miles of  
16 constructing two new segments of 115 kV transmission  
17 line in two new areas where there's currently no  
18 transmission line existing. And, again, I'll show  
19 you on the next slide where those two segments are  
20 located.

21                      The project also involves abandoning in  
22 place approximately one mile of existing 69 kv line.  
23 By abandoning in place, that just simply means there  
24 will be a one-mile segment along County Road 140  
25 where the poles will remain in place but the lines

1 will no longer carry electricity.

2 Lastly, the project involves modifying  
3 three of the existing substations. I'm sorry, this  
4 slide got a little cut off. But the three  
5 substations are Scott County; Augusta Substation,  
6 which is the furthest west in the project; and the  
7 Victoria Substation, which is at the northern end of  
8 that three-mile Great River Energy segment.

9 The Scott County Substation will be  
10 expanded somewhat to the west on Xcel Energy's  
11 property to accommodate some of the new substation  
12 equipment to upgrade to 115 kV, and the Augusta and  
13 Victoria substations, work there will be internal to  
14 the existing substation footprint. There won't be  
15 any additional expansion or any visual changes to  
16 the substation since they're bringing in new  
17 transformers, again, to accommodate the upgraded  
18 115.

19 So if we look at the map overview here to  
20 describe the -- or show where these various segments  
21 are located, first starting with the rebuild areas,  
22 which again total approximately six miles that are  
23 in the first description, those are shown here in  
24 the map in orange. This project starts at the  
25 western edge just west of the Aue Lake there on the

1 left side of the screen and extends along County  
2 Road 140. Again shown in orange is the areas of the  
3 rebuild. So there's one segment of rebuild, the  
4 second segment here from the intersection of County  
5 Road 140 and Highway 212 to the existing substation  
6 in the city of Chaska. And then the third segment  
7 of rebuild -- rebuild an existing line from 69 to  
8 115 begins here at Second and Beech Street and  
9 continues east/southeast across the Minnesota River  
10 and ends at the eastern terminus of the project,  
11 which is the Scott County Substation.

12 The segment involving converting the  
13 operating voltage from 69 kV to 115 is shown here in  
14 yellow from the intersection of County Road 140 and  
15 Guernsey Avenue. It extends approximately three  
16 miles north to the Victoria Substation. This is the  
17 line that's owned and operated by Great River Energy  
18 and involves only converting the operating voltage.  
19 There won't be any physical changes to this line in  
20 terms or replacing structures. The only change will  
21 be switching out switch structure here near the  
22 intersection.

23 This segment shown in gray here is  
24 approximately one mile. This is the area of  
25 existing 69 kV line that will be abandoned in place.

1        Those poles will remain in place but, again, won't  
2        carry electricity through this segment.

3                The first area of new transmission line  
4        is shown here in red. This is our proposed route to  
5        bring 115 kV transmission line through an area where  
6        one currently exists in the intersections of 140 and  
7        212, north along the west side of 212 along Creek  
8        Road to Engler, and then extending north to the  
9        recently-constructed West Creek Substation, which  
10       was constructed by the city of Chaska.

11               The second short segment of new  
12       transmission line is shown here (indicating). It's  
13       approximately a half a mile. This would replace or  
14       rebuild the transmission line that currently goes  
15       through essentially the center of Chaska here, which  
16       is shown in the black crosshatch there. For this  
17       segment, through the city of Chaska, we're proposing  
18       to reroute this line in a route that we discussed  
19       with the City of Chaska upon their request to  
20       convert from the center of town to more closely  
21       follow existing transmission corridors, railroad  
22       right-of-way, and roads a little bit further to the  
23       northeast edge of the city.

24               And then the last thing I mentioned, this  
25       rebuild segment that goes across the Minnesota River

1 and, again, ends at the eastern terminus of the  
2 project at the Scott County Substation.

3 So I'd like to turn it over to Paul  
4 Lehman, regulatory manager. He'll talk a little bit  
5 more about the need behind the project, and then  
6 I'll explain in more details about the route  
7 application.

8 MR. LEHMAN: Thank you, Sage.

9 As Sage said, I am Paul Lehman. I'm a  
10 regulatory manager with the company. And my role  
11 with this project is to work through the permitting  
12 that is needed to demonstrate to the Minnesota  
13 Public Utilities Commission that we have a need for  
14 this project and we've developed a solution to that  
15 need and that would be approved under what's called  
16 our certificate of need process.

17 So we filed our certificate of need  
18 earlier this year, back in May. And we're going to  
19 go through the process, as we're describing here  
20 tonight, to get those approvals that we, in fact,  
21 have a problem that need to be solved and that we  
22 have a solution to that.

23 So why are we proposing this? We're  
24 proposing this so that we can make improvements to  
25 our transmission system that will allow us to

1       continue to reliably serve our customers, ourselves,  
2       and Great River Energy. We want to make sure that  
3       we can continue to meet the growing demand for  
4       electricity. As you may know, there's a new data  
5       center out to the west of the city that has come on  
6       line and is building up its capability to provide  
7       the data center activities that are taking place  
8       there, and that's a significant issue to load that  
9       we have to serve on the system.

10               And so this growing demand -- what we are  
11       expecting to happen with this growing demand and  
12       this new data center is that we have a possibility  
13       of what we call overloading our facilities and have  
14       a potential for not having the quality of that  
15       service to our customers to be adequate by having  
16       the voltages that we use to serve our customers. We  
17       want to avoid those problems from happening, so  
18       those are the things that we're going to try and  
19       solve through this process.

20               So let's start with just giving you a  
21       perspective of how the power that the customers in  
22       the area use, where it's coming from. We've been  
23       describing this system as being supplied by what we  
24       call our Scott County Substation to the east.  
25       That's the location where the power is brought into

1 the substation and transformed down to the 69 kV  
2 voltage to carry out to the customers' substations  
3 that we talked about, the Augusta and the Victoria  
4 substations. It also has power that comes from the  
5 west that comes from what we also call our Carver  
6 County substation. So those are the two main feed  
7 points that deliver power to this system that we're  
8 talking about here. And as you can see on here,  
9 about half, 52 percent of the power consumption on  
10 the system that we're trying to solve as problems,  
11 comes from the east from that Scott County  
12 Substation, and the rest comes from the western side  
13 out of the Carver County Substation. So if  
14 everything's working just the way it's supposed to  
15 work, that's how the power delivery to this area is  
16 provided, is coming from those two main sources of  
17 power.

18 So, as I said, we're trying to solve two  
19 problems. One of those problems is the overload  
20 conditions. And while this is probably a little  
21 more easy to understand, basically when we build a  
22 facility, be it a transmission line or other  
23 facilities, the facilities have a certain  
24 capability. They can carry a certain amount of  
25 power on them. And if power that is needed by our

1 customers exceeds that, they end up being  
2 overloaded. And if a facility is overloaded, it's  
3 at risk of being damaged. So we design our system  
4 to avoid overloading on it. So we're looking to  
5 avoid that overload, because that can actually  
6 damage our equipment; and, therefore, we don't want  
7 that to happen.

8 Similarly, if the system is not designed  
9 adequately and we're not able to deliver the power  
10 to our customers in a reliable way, the potential is  
11 there for voltage level to diminish or drop off such  
12 that the equipment of our customers can, in fact, be  
13 damaged. So what we want to do is to make sure that  
14 we're providing power to our customers, electricity  
15 to our customers that's done in a way that they get  
16 the quality of power that's necessary for their  
17 equipment to be safe and reliable as well. So  
18 that's our reasons that we're looking at trying to  
19 solve this problem.

20 So here's what we've observed or what  
21 we're predicting to happen as this area load  
22 continues to grow. As I said, we have source of  
23 power of electricity that comes from the east -- I'm  
24 trying to get the mouse to work. So what we want to  
25 do is look at what happens if we don't have -- the



1 mouse is misbehaving a little bit here. So I'll try  
2 one more time to get it to show you. Well, I think  
3 you can see on here, if you look to the eastern side  
4 of here, I've got an X on the map that shows if the  
5 line that provides power from the east is out of  
6 service coming from our Scott County Substation,  
7 that means all the power that the customers in this  
8 area need has to come from the west from that Carver  
9 County Substation. And if that happens, then the  
10 line that carries that power is expected to  
11 overload. As it shows here, we would see somewhere  
12 like about 120 percent loading on that line. Now,  
13 again, 100 percent means that it's carrying the most  
14 power it should. And if it's up at 120 percent,  
15 it's at risk of being damaged, and we want to avoid  
16 that. So that's a problem we're expecting to take  
17 place, and we want to avoid that from happening.

18 Similarly, if you look what we show here  
19 (indicating) is what the voltage level on the  
20 transmission system would potentially drop to. And,  
21 again, it shows the voltage of 95 percent. Again,  
22 if we were providing the power to our customers at  
23 exactly the way it's been designed, you'd see that  
24 number right around 100 percent. What we're showing  
25 here is the power delivery voltage wise is dropping

1 off. And if it gets much below this 95 percent  
2 level, we start running the potential that our  
3 customers' equipment that they use could, in fact,  
4 get damaged. So we're looking to avoid these types  
5 of problems from happening.

6 Similarly, even if we don't have a  
7 problem on the lines themselves, the line that comes  
8 out of Scott County and delivers power towards the  
9 Chaska area, if some equipment within that  
10 substation at Scott County was unavailable,  
11 specifically the equipment I'm talking about is the  
12 transformer that takes power from the higher  
13 voltages and brings it down to the 69 kV, if one of  
14 those transformers is out of service, the other  
15 transformer will, in fact, start exceeding its  
16 rating. It shows here we're seeing the potential is  
17 about 113 percent under the conditions modeled here.  
18 Again, we're trying to avoid those things from  
19 happening, those numbers getting up above  
20 100 percent. Transformers we have a little more  
21 flexibility; but, nevertheless, we would want to  
22 avoid getting those loadings too much higher than  
23 this. So those are the problems that we're trying  
24 to take care of.

25 So we've got this project that we've

1       proposed. We've proposed this project so that it  
2       will eliminate the overloading of the lines that are  
3       bringing power in to the customers here. We'll  
4       avoid it for two reasons: One, that we will bring  
5       delivery at a higher voltage so we can carry more  
6       power when we deliver at a higher voltage; and we'll  
7       be putting on better conductors, better lines  
8       themselves because they'll be brand new. So we'll  
9       eliminate those overloading conditions and, because  
10      of the stronger line, we'll be able to keep that  
11      voltage level that we serve our customers at up  
12      where they're supposed to be, at around the  
13      100 percent range.

14               It will also improve the reliability.  
15      This is an old line, and we have problems with older  
16      lines being able to maintain it and in service and  
17      operating reliably. So we will be doing this to  
18      improve the reliability of the service to our  
19      customers as well.

20               And then, finally, we'll be providing  
21      sufficient capacity for the system to continue to  
22      grow as customer load continues to grow, as that  
23      next data center comes down the road sometime -- who  
24      knows in the future -- we'll have sufficient  
25      capacity in the transmission system to meet that

1 growing customer need.

2 So now I'll turn it back to Sage to start  
3 talking about some more of the routing issues.

4 MS. TAUBER: Thanks, Paul.

5 I just want to take about five more  
6 minutes to explain a few more things. One, to  
7 introduce the concept of the route width. I'll talk  
8 a little bit about vegetation management, show a few  
9 photos of the proposed structures or the poles that  
10 we're proposing to use in this project, and then  
11 just show a few photos of the project area just for  
12 orientation.

13 So, first of all, I want to introduce the  
14 concept of the right-of-way versus the route width.  
15 As part of the route permit process, the Public  
16 Utilities Commission will approve a route width  
17 within which the utility is allowed to design the  
18 final alignment of the transmission line. Within  
19 the route width, which in this schematic is shown in  
20 green, there's the actual right-of-way, which is  
21 shown in yellow. And the right-of-way is the area  
22 that the utility will actually acquire for the  
23 easement where the transmission line will actually  
24 be located. So for this particular project, Xcel  
25 Energy is requesting a route width of 200 feet in

1        those areas of the project that involve rebuilding  
2        the existing transmission line.

3                In areas where we're constructing a  
4        brand-new transmission line, we're requesting a  
5        400-foot route width to allow flexibility for where  
6        the final alignment can be located. So, again, in  
7        this schematic, the area shown in green would range  
8        between 200 and 400 feet, depending on whether it  
9        was rebuild area or new construction area. But the  
10       actual area that the utility will acquire easement  
11       for is 75 feet within that larger route width.

12               So this route width concept allows  
13       flexibility in the final design so that when we're  
14       looking at where the actual structures will be  
15       located and where the final alignment for the  
16       transmission line will be, we can maneuver around  
17       particular constraints; we can work with landowners  
18       to avoid particular concern areas, whether it be a  
19       stand of trees or sensitive habitat area or  
20       environmental conditions such as soil conditions or  
21       steep slopes that might warrant a need for  
22       flexibility in our route.

23               In this particular schematic, this  
24       example shows a sewer main there on the left side of  
25       the yellow right-of-way. So this diagram is

1        showing, for example, how we would have the  
2        flexibility to route the transmission line around  
3        the constraints; in this case, existing  
4        infrastructure like a sewer main. So within that  
5        route width we can identify where the actual  
6        right-of-way would be for the final design, which  
7        comes after the Public Utilities Commission approves  
8        the permit and the route width.

9                So it can sometimes be a little confusing  
10       understanding those two distinctions. So what  
11       you'll see on the route maps that we have here in  
12       the front of the room, you'll see our anticipated  
13       alignment, which is where we anticipate the  
14       transmission line to be located, and you'll also see  
15       the 200-foot and 400-foot route width identified on  
16       this map, and that's the area within which that  
17       alignment can move during the final design.

18               Next, I'd like to introduce the structure  
19       types that are proposed for this project. The  
20       existing structures on the 69 kV line that we see in  
21       this area map are a combination of wood structures  
22       and steel structures. The new structures that we're  
23       proposing for both the rebuild and the new  
24       construction segments of this project would be  
25       steel, primarily of the middle or the right-hand

1 side type of structures. These are what are called  
2 braced post structure or a horizontal structure  
3 shown on the right. The middle photo showing  
4 self-weathering steel, and the one on the right is  
5 galvanized steel. One or both or a combination of  
6 these types of structures may be used in various  
7 areas along the route. The weathering steel, as you  
8 can see, has more of a rusted appearance, whereas  
9 the galvanized steel structures that you may have  
10 noticed around the area stay that shiny silver  
11 color.

12 The structure here on the far left is  
13 called an H-Frame structure. This is the type of  
14 structure that's used in longer spans. In this  
15 project it's used in the furthest east segment that  
16 runs from the downtown Chaska -- edge of Chaska,  
17 Second and Beech Street area, as it extends to the  
18 southeast across the Minnesota River. These H-Frame  
19 structures are the type of structures that are  
20 existing now. We anticipate replacing the majority  
21 of those similar H-Frame structures, slightly  
22 taller, or possibly a wide frame structure, which is  
23 not shown here on this slide, but there's a photo of  
24 it in the back left-hand corner of the room.

25 So, in general, like I mentioned, the new

1 structures -- in order to accommodate the added  
2 weight and the high clearance of upgrading from 69  
3 kV line to 115 kV line, the new structures will be  
4 slightly taller, slightly larger than the existing  
5 structures. So this is just a very general photo,  
6 typical of a change that you might see. The  
7 existing height of the structures in this area are  
8 on average approximately 60 feet tall, whereas the  
9 new proposed structures would be, again, on average  
10 from 10 to 20 feet taller.

11 In terms of the anticipated project  
12 schedule, as I mentioned, we have submitted our  
13 route permit application. And like Paul mentioned,  
14 we submitted a certificate of need. We anticipate  
15 that this regulatory permit process will be  
16 completed, we expect, in the summer of 2013. At  
17 that time we'll finalize engineering design and  
18 begin construction, and our anticipated project  
19 in-service date is the spring of 2014.

20 This a general schematic that shows a bit  
21 of a description of how vegetation clearing occurs  
22 for both the construction and operation of a  
23 transmission line. As you can see here -- it's a  
24 little hard to read here. We have this photo on a  
25 larger poster also. If you have questions



1 afterwards, we can talk a little more about it. But  
2 in general you'll see the various zones of the  
3 vegetation area. Again, this is just a typical  
4 description to convey the fact that directly beneath  
5 the transmission line here, what's called the wire  
6 zone, is limited to low-growing, with a gradual  
7 increase in the allowable heights of the vegetation  
8 moving further away from the transmission line. It  
9 borders out where it's low shrubs, short branch  
10 trees. And then outside of the right-of-way the  
11 hazard clearing zone, you can see depicted on the  
12 right side of the photo a dead tree which could pose  
13 a hazard should it fall on the transmission line.  
14 So typically the easement will include language that  
15 will require the removal of any trees that may pose  
16 a safety hazard to the transmission line.

17 The next two photos just show again the  
18 very general typical before and after photo, after  
19 the vegetation clearing has occurred for either  
20 construction or operation of the transmission line.  
21 In general vegetation management is an ongoing  
22 process that occurs typically on a five-year cycle  
23 when the right-of-way will be cleared, again for  
24 safety purposes.

25 Another photo along Broadway showing

1 before and after, showing the extent of vegetation  
2 clearing within the right-of-way.

3 And then, lastly, I just have a few  
4 photos here of the project area, just for  
5 orientation. Some of them may look familiar to you.  
6 This is the -- again, the existing 69 kV  
7 transmission line looking west at the intersection  
8 of Guernsey Avenue and County Road 140. These are  
9 the structures, you can see on the left side of the  
10 road, that would be replaced and rebuilt in  
11 generally the same alignment.

12 Again, the existing line, these are what  
13 are called wishbone structures. That would be  
14 replaced again with the horizontal post or brace  
15 post structure, slightly taller, along, again,  
16 County Road 140.

17 This shows some existing galvanized steel  
18 structures that are at the intersection here of  
19 Highway 212 and 140 overpass.

20 This is coming through town here, Creek  
21 Road. You can see existing transmission line going  
22 up the hill here.

23 And this is the neighborhood Cascade  
24 Drive and Tupelo Way area. Again, these are the  
25 existing galvanized steel structures, similar to

1           what we would propose to be replacing 115 kV  
2           structures.

3                       The intersection of Second and Beech  
4           Street, this is the location which is the furthest  
5           east segment, takes off southeastward across the  
6           Minnesota River.

7                       Here you can see the existing H-Frame  
8           structures, like I mentioned, that are used in  
9           longer spans across the river. This heads toward  
10          the eastern terminus of the project with the Scott  
11          County Substation.

12                      Going back -- right down here at the  
13          intersection of Chaska Boulevard, showing again the  
14          existing 69 kV line.

15                      So, again, we have more detailed maps  
16          here of the route, the proposed route, from west to  
17          east up here in front of the room. And we're happy  
18          to answer more questions, if you have any particular  
19          property on these maps in the front or any questions  
20          that you may have.

21                      Thanks.

22                      MR. STORM: Thank you, Sage.

23                      Okay. As I stated, I'll just go through  
24          the two processes, the process around the  
25          certificate of need and the process around the

1 routing docket.

2 As I said in the beginning, Bill Storm,  
3 Department of Commerce Energy Facility Permitting.  
4 The Energy Facility Permitting Unit within the  
5 Department of Commerce serves at the pleasure of the  
6 Public Utilities Commission. We assist them with  
7 the logistics of administering the process, and we  
8 also do the environmental review for these large  
9 projects.

10 The PUC is a five-member commission  
11 appointed by the governor. There's a pamphlet on  
12 the front that describes how they're appointed, how  
13 the terms run, and the terms for how they're  
14 appointed and approved by the Senate.

15 Anyway, in this case, what we're doing,  
16 the PUC regulates wind farms, pipelines,  
17 transmission lines, and power plants of certain  
18 regulatory thresholds.

19 The -- there is one project that we're  
20 dealing with tonight. It is the Southwest Twin City  
21 Chaska Area rebuild of an existing 69 kV line to a  
22 115 kV line. There are two dockets associated with  
23 that project. As you've heard tonight, the first  
24 docket is the certificate of need docket. In this  
25 docket the utility must prove to the Public

1           Utilities Commission that, one, there is a need, and  
2           that, two, the solution to that need is a  
3           transmission line solution.

4                       This basically just states there is a  
5           threshold for when a given project requires a  
6           certificate of need. That threshold is a  
7           transmission line in excess of 100 kilovolts and  
8           over ten miles long. This project meets that  
9           threshold and, therefore, does require a certificate  
10          of need from the Commission.

11                      On May 15th, 2012 Xcel/GRE submitted a  
12          CN, certificate of need, documenting its position to  
13          the Public Utilities Commission. And in that  
14          document they are putting forth that there is a need  
15          and that the solution to the need is a rebuild of  
16          the existing 69 kV line.

17                      On August 21st, 2012 the Commission  
18          accepted the CN application as complete. Now, when  
19          the Commission accepts a CN as complete, they are  
20          not giving their stamp of approval to the project or  
21          prejudging the need in any way; they are just saying  
22          that the application contains all the pieces/parts  
23          that the statute and rules say it needs to contain.  
24          The merit of those pieces/parts is developed through  
25          the process, and that Commission approval of the

1           completeness of the application kicks off that  
2           process.

3                       My role in the certificate of need docket  
4           is, again, to administer the program, set up the  
5           meeting, do the notices. But one of my major goals  
6           is environmental review. A large energy project  
7           going through the certificate of need process needs  
8           to have an environmental review done. And for  
9           this -- for the CN project, the environmental review  
10          is a high elevation review. We look at what is the  
11          impact of what the Applicants are proposing and what  
12          would be the impact of other ways to meet the need.  
13          Maybe if they're proposing a transmission solution,  
14          we look at what are the generation solutions and  
15          what are their impacts. If they're looking at a 69  
16          to 115, we might look at a 69 to a 345 and see what  
17          the impacts of that are. So the impacts and the  
18          review that occur at the CN stage are sort of high  
19          level looking at is this -- looking at the  
20          solution -- the overall solution and what are the  
21          impacts of that solution and potential alternatives  
22          to that solution.

23                      In the CN process there's also a public  
24          hearing. Once the environmental review document is  
25          completed and it's released to the public, the next

1 step is a public hearing. That public hearing will  
2 be down here. It will be presided over by an  
3 administrative law, an ALJ. And that will be an  
4 opportunity for the public to comment again on the  
5 project, to comment on the environmental review of  
6 the project, and express their concerns and their  
7 interests to the ALJ.

8 This is a sort of a schematic of the  
9 milestones that are involved in the CN process. The  
10 CN process is usually about a year-long process.  
11 And you'll see when I go through the routing process  
12 that some of these milestones are the same. And we  
13 anticipate combining some of the milestones to  
14 create some efficiencies in the system. And I will  
15 explain that further.

16 One project. Two dockets. The second  
17 docket being the routing docket. The CN docket is a  
18 docket that looks at the need of the project and the  
19 solution to that need. The routing docket looks at,  
20 okay, if they prove need to the PUC and they -- and  
21 the PUC buys off on the solution, where do we build  
22 that transmission line. And this is where the  
23 routing process comes in. And just like the CN  
24 process, the routing process has regulatory  
25 thresholds; and this project is above those

1 regulatory thresholds, so they do need a routing  
2 permit from the PUC.

3 The routing process. There are two  
4 processes available under the routing process, a  
5 full process and an alternative process. The  
6 alternative process is a more streamlined process  
7 designed for smaller, less controversial projects.  
8 This project, it has thresholds, qualification  
9 thresholds. This project qualifies for the  
10 alternative process, and that's the process we will  
11 be following here. It's a six-month process as  
12 opposed to the year-long process on the full review  
13 side. But both processes, whether it's full review  
14 or alternative review, both processes have public  
15 meetings, environmental review documents, and public  
16 hearing.

17 On July 11th, 2012 Xcel Energy submitted  
18 their application to the Public Utilities  
19 Commission, their route permit application. On  
20 September 11th of 2012 the Public Utilities  
21 Commission accepted the route permit as complete.  
22 And just as with the CN application, their accepting  
23 the application as complete is not an endorsement of  
24 their approval for this project. It is just an  
25 acknowledgment of you have dotted all your T's and



1       crossed all your I's or the other way around, and  
2       everything is in there that should be in there. The  
3       merits of that information will be discussed as we  
4       go through the process.

5               Now, in the alternative process, the  
6       Applicant only needs to put one route on the table.  
7       If this was a longer line, higher voltage, and we  
8       were doing a full process, the Applicant would have  
9       to provide their preferred route and an alternative  
10      route. But since we're doing the short process,  
11      they only need to put one route on the table.

12             However, part of the reason we're here  
13      tonight is not only to inform the public of the  
14      process and the project, but it is also to scope the  
15      environmental document. And part of that scoping  
16      the environmental document is I need to hear from  
17      the public what are your issues; do you have local  
18      knowledge of local issues, whether it be a meadow  
19      that's a fen or has some special significance to the  
20      community or something like that.

21             The other thing -- the other aspect I'm  
22      seeking for my scoping is what other alternatives do  
23      you want me to look at? And this goes for both the  
24      need process and the routing process. In the need  
25      process, somebody might say, well, I'm not crazy

1       about the transmission line solution; why don't you  
2       look at generation solution; why don't you look at  
3       putting windmills in or other types of generation.  
4       In the routing process you may say I want you to  
5       look at these certain issues, EMF, you know, stray  
6       voltage; but you may also say, I want you to look at  
7       a different route; I don't agree with the proposed  
8       route, so in your environmental report, Bill, I want  
9       you to evaluate this route. And this is an  
10      opportunity for you to put another route on the  
11      table, given the fact that the Applicant only has to  
12      put one route on the table in this proceeding. And  
13      you have until October 12th. Again that  
14      information's there. I'll go over that a little  
15      later on.

16               So in the alternative process the  
17      Applicant puts one route on the table. The EFP  
18      holds a public information scoping meeting. That's  
19      what we're doing tonight. EFP prepares an  
20      environmental review document. In the routing  
21      process, the environmental review document is called  
22      environmental assessment; and it looks at the  
23      impacts of the route that the Applicant is putting  
24      on the table, both impacts to human settlement and  
25      impacts to the natural environment; but it also

1 looks at alternative routes and their impacts and  
2 compares them and tries to build a matrix so that  
3 the PUC -- if the Applicant makes it through the  
4 need portion, then the PUC can pick a route that is  
5 appropriate.

6 The next thing that the alternative  
7 process has is a public hearing. And that public  
8 hearing, just like the CN public hearing, will be  
9 down here. It will be presided over by an ALJ.  
10 That will be an opportunity again for the public to  
11 stress an issue that's important to the public, to  
12 comment on the environmental document, and to put  
13 testimony and evidence into the record.

14 Once -- when we're down here for the  
15 public meeting, when the public meeting ends, the  
16 ALJ will assign a comment period, usually ten days,  
17 for people to put in written comments. The public  
18 will submit written comments to that. The ALJ will  
19 then make a report with findings of fact and his  
20 conclusion and his recommendation. And that whole  
21 record with the ALJ report will come back to me. I  
22 will put it together, and it will be presented to  
23 the PUC, the five-member Commission, and they will  
24 make a determination on should they grant a route  
25 permit, where the route should be, and what

1 conditions should be put on that permit.

2 The process is geared to take six months,  
3 but given -- getting controversy, it may slide a  
4 little bit here or there to that. But six months is  
5 usually our target for completing the alternative  
6 process.

7 Now, this is the schematic for the  
8 milestones for the alternative process. And as you  
9 can see, the public information scoping meeting,  
10 environmental document, public hearing, very similar  
11 to what you saw on the schematic for the CN docket.  
12 And as such, what we'll try to do is we'll combine  
13 some of the processes.

14 One other thing I wanted to mention is  
15 that when I write the environmental document, I do  
16 not do it alone. There are other agencies that will  
17 have to provide permits to the Applicant for them to  
18 complete this project. And what I try to do is I  
19 solicit input from those other agencies. An example  
20 would be, if the line is going to cross a public  
21 water, the Applicant eventually, before they can  
22 build, after they get approval from the PUC, they  
23 will need to get a permit from the DNR to cross  
24 public waters. The same thing may be for if they  
25 need to dewater, they may have to get a dewater

1 permit from the MPCA. They may need a storm permit  
2 from the MPCA. Part of -- this slide goes to show  
3 you that, as I build my environmental document, I  
4 seek information out from these agencies to find are  
5 there any fatal flaws in this project, are there  
6 any -- are there any things that they see, that  
7 these agencies see in this project that would  
8 prevent them from permitting it down the road. If  
9 there are, let's get it incorporated into the  
10 environmental assessment and how can we mitigate  
11 that.

12 Now, as I spoke, there are milestones.  
13 There are some milestones that overlap. And in an  
14 effort to be efficient, we will be combining some of  
15 those milestones. The first one is tonight's  
16 meeting. This is a meeting for -- this is a public  
17 information scoping meeting for both the CN process  
18 and the routing process. We will also hold -- I  
19 will also do an environmental report, environmental  
20 document that will serve the purpose of both CN and  
21 routing requirements. So there will be one  
22 environmental document generated, but it will  
23 incorporate the requirements under the CN  
24 environmental review and requirements under the  
25 routing environmental review. And, likewise, since

1 both processes need a hearing, we will do one  
2 hearing down here that will incorporate both of  
3 those. So it's just more efficient to do it that  
4 way.

5 Now, if you're interested in tracking the  
6 project, because as I get comments from other state  
7 agencies or comments from local units of government  
8 or comments from citizens, I will -- I will assemble  
9 the comments, convert them into PDFs and then put  
10 them on my website. The EFP does maintain a  
11 website, and the first URL there is our website that  
12 we maintain. And you'll be able to find public  
13 notices there, public comments there, the scoping  
14 decision when the scoping decision comes out after  
15 the comment period from this meeting, the  
16 environmental document will be posted there, the  
17 notice for the public hearing will be posted there,  
18 and information generated in the public hearing will  
19 be posted there. And it's a nice, easy way for the  
20 public to track the project, if you're interested in  
21 the project.

22 Now, there's another way to track  
23 information for the project, which is a more  
24 official record keeping way, and that's a site  
25 maintained by the Public Utilities Commission, and

1       it's called e-docket system, and that's the second  
2       URL there. And the e-docket system contains much of  
3       the same information but in an official format. Our  
4       website contains the official record, but I also  
5       throw stuff up there that might not necessarily be  
6       the official record but things that I think the  
7       public in a particular docket may find interesting  
8       or useful. And if you go to e-dockets, once you log  
9       on, it will ask you for the year and the case  
10      number. For the CN the year is 11, the case number  
11      is 826. For the routing, it will ask you for the  
12      year, which is 12, and then the case number, which  
13      is 401 on this one. And there will be similar  
14      information there that's all the information  
15      contained in the record.

16               Now, as I said, there's a couple reasons  
17      why we're here tonight. One is to inform the public  
18      of the project, inform the public of the process.  
19      But my main reason for being here is to try to get  
20      input from the public on what do you want to see in  
21      the environmental document. And the draft scoping  
22      document, which I put together, is sort of a  
23      run-through of what scoping means and how we do  
24      scoping. But the important part of it is what --  
25      gives you what I think should be in my document, the

1 areas that I plan on covering. But if you -- as you  
2 look through this and you see, well, Bill, I know  
3 that there's an old grovestand of oak along that  
4 existing line, I'm a little concerned about that, I  
5 want to make sure you cover that in your  
6 environmental document, you know, or you have some  
7 other issue that you're aware of, local issue, this  
8 is the opportunity and the comment period that  
9 follows is the opportunity to provide that  
10 information to me.

11 Same thing with the route. If you don't  
12 believe that the existing 69 kV right-of-way is the  
13 appropriate right-of-way -- maybe it was put in so  
14 long ago things have changed and you feel -- other  
15 than I just don't want to see it in my backyard,  
16 although people do comment on that; we get that  
17 comment pretty often. But what we're looking for is  
18 if you have a reason -- a reason that you think the  
19 existing right-of-way is not as good as another  
20 route may be, maybe following another road or  
21 something, this is your opportunity to ask me to  
22 evaluate that route, you know, to put another  
23 alternative on the table.

24 If I go through the scoping process and  
25 no local unit of government or no citizens come



1 forward with an alternative, the only alternative I  
2 will be evaluating then will be the preferred route  
3 that the utilities put on the table.

4 Anyway, so since that's the main reason  
5 I'm here -- I know we have a light crowd here  
6 tonight -- I do want to give you an opportunity to  
7 tell me any issues you have concern, you make sure I  
8 cover in the environmental review document, any  
9 route that you may want me to consider. But also  
10 this is an opportunity for you to ask Xcel or GRE a  
11 specific problem; hey, my property is here; how do  
12 you plan on maintaining vegetation along this line.

13 So, with that, I'm going to turn it over  
14 to you. Like I said, I do have a court reporter  
15 here. If you do want to speak, I ask you to stand,  
16 state and spell your name and ask your question or  
17 give your comment. If you're not comfortable  
18 speaking publicly, you certainly can email me or  
19 snail mail me by October 12th, and I will take your  
20 comments into consideration.

21 With that, I'll turn to over. Does  
22 anybody want to ask any questions?

23 Okay. Sir, will you please stand up,  
24 state and spell your name.

25 MR. CARMICHAEL: My name is Jim

1 Carmichael. Live here in Chaska. We lost power  
2 about a week ago for just two seconds; but it kicked  
3 off all the resets, service breakers. Does this  
4 have anything to do with that? In other words, did  
5 we ever -- I called and nobody knew why that  
6 happened. Apparently we lost power downtown. So it  
7 kicked off substation and so it kicked our circuit  
8 breakers. The question -- that was the first  
9 question. Number two is what's it's going to cost  
10 and who pays?

11 MR. STORM: Okay. Sage or Paul, you want  
12 to -- or somebody from Xcel want to -- Sage.

13 Please stand up and state your name.

14 MR. GEIGER: I'm Dan Geiger, electric  
15 director for the City of Chaska. The outage you  
16 were referring to took out one of our feeder  
17 breakers at our downtown substation. It was due to  
18 a squirrel getting into a line. A squirrel caused a  
19 fault on the line, and the line reclosed. So this  
20 particular project wouldn't have had anything to do  
21 with that particular distribution.

22 MR. CARMICHAEL: And it wouldn't have  
23 happened?

24 MR. GEIGER: Wouldn't have had any effect  
25 whatsoever. It still would have happened with the

1 squirrel.

2 MR. CARMICHAEL: Well, but would the loss  
3 of power still be there?

4 MR. GEIGER: Correct, because it was  
5 caused by the squirrel.

6 MR. CARMICHAEL: Yeah. Okay.

7 MR. LEHMAN: And I'll see if I can answer  
8 your second question. It was something about the  
9 cost?

10 MR. CARMICHAEL: Yeah, what it's going to  
11 cost and who pays?

12 MR. LEHMAN: The second part of that  
13 question is maybe a little more challenging than the  
14 first one. I'm going to turn to my project manager  
15 and ask what's the project cost that we're talking?

16 MR. STORM: Stand, state your name, spell  
17 it.

18 MR. AYIKA: My name is Chris, C-H-R-I-S,  
19 last name A-Y-I-K-A. And the project as we have it  
20 right now for the substation and the transmission  
21 line upgrade is about \$18 million.

22 MR. CARMICHAEL: 8 million?

23 MR. AYIKA: 18.

24 MR. LEHMAN: One-eight. So \$18 million.  
25 So now the second part of the question about who

1       pays. This project will be like any other projects  
2       we develop on our system, and the way we do that is  
3       we consider that as part of just the general  
4       improvements we have to make to our system. So all  
5       of the customers who benefit from it will pay.

6               Now, in this case there's a number of  
7       different customers who will benefit; Great River  
8       Energy customers, City of Chaska customers will pay.  
9       So all of those customers will have some  
10      responsibility for paying for some of the costs.  
11      But most directly Xcel Energy is the one investing.  
12      We'll put it into our rate base; so, therefore,  
13      we'll be the ones to have our customers pay for it.

14             MR. CARMICHAEL: Thank you.

15             MR. STORM: Sir behind him. State and  
16      spell your name, please.

17             MR. ERNST: Gene Ernst. First name is  
18      G-E-N-E. Ernst, E-R-N-S-T. Located at 3250 Chaska  
19      Boulevard. My question really relates to the  
20      right-of-way versus the route width. My existing  
21      building right now is within 23 feet, approximately,  
22      or 20 feet from the centerline of the existing high  
23      line that goes through there right now. It is an  
24      historical building. It's in the Carver County  
25      Historical Directory. And when you talk about

1           75 feet and various widths that you're proposing, I  
2           guess I'm curious to know if that's going to be  
3           increased or it's going to stay the same? Right now  
4           there's one wood structure that's in front of my  
5           building; and then the next structure is clear down  
6           the next block, which is one of the large metal  
7           galvanized structures in front of Walgreen's. So I  
8           was just curious.

9                         And also within that 20 feet, four of my  
10          seven major trees on my lot are within, say, 15 or  
11          20 feet of the centerline that main line goes  
12          through. So I'm just curious how that's going to  
13          change with this and what is going to happen with  
14          that structure. The wood structure, will that be  
15          changed out to one of the larger three-foot diameter  
16          or five-foot diameter major galvanized poles and  
17          whether that can stay on that -- stay at that  
18          location or if it can move to the east or to the  
19          west, which is on city property and they would have  
20          to address that? So those are really my questions  
21          at this point.

22                        MR. STORM: Okay. Let me take generally  
23          the first part of that, and then I'll turn the  
24          specifics over to Xcel. The statute and the rules  
25          for the routing of a transmission line allow the

1 utility to come in with a route. And that route  
2 width can be a mile and a quarter, although that --  
3 in practice that doesn't happen anymore. It's much  
4 lower than that. So you have the concept of a  
5 route, which they're seeking approval for. Then you  
6 have a concept of the alignment with a right-of-way,  
7 which is actually the easement that they need to fit  
8 that line. And in this case, for the existing 69  
9 portions, they're asking for a route width of  
10 200 feet, and for the re -- for the new line, new  
11 rights-of-way where there isn't an existing line,  
12 they're asking for 400 feet.

13 The reason the statute and rule is set up  
14 that way is so that the utility has flexibility.  
15 Because if the PUC granted them a permit for just  
16 75-feet wide, when they got to your property, they  
17 would -- they wouldn't have any flexibility. The  
18 concept behind giving them a route that's wider than  
19 the right-of-way they need is so that they can work  
20 with local landowners to get around certain issues  
21 but still stay within an area that's being evaluated  
22 by the regulatory body.

23 So that's -- that's the concept of a  
24 route verse an easement. Okay?

25 For the specifics, I'm going to turn it

1 over to Xcel to -- if you can answer a specific  
2 question.

3 MS. TAUBER: Sure, yeah. Yeah, with  
4 regard to -- I'll see if I can hit all of the  
5 various points you brought up. But with regard to  
6 your first question about would that right-of-way  
7 area or the easement expand, for those areas of the  
8 project and the segments where we're proposing to  
9 rebuild the existing line in the -- approximately in  
10 the existing alignment, we'll try to stay within  
11 existing right-of-way as much as possible. So we'll  
12 try to minimize the need to expand those areas of  
13 rights-of-way.

14 But like Bill was explaining, the concept  
15 of the route width does allow for that flexibility.  
16 Like you say, if there's a preferred location where  
17 you'd like the structure to be moved to, we can  
18 certainly take that into account when we look at the  
19 final design, the pole placement and structural  
20 alignment.

21 So I think that's a great example of we  
22 appreciate, you know, any specific comments that you  
23 might have in your particular area, and we'll be  
24 happy to work with you during the final design and  
25 how that might fit within the route width in this

1           concept of utilizing that type of flexibility.

2                       With regard to the structure, you  
3           mentioned it's currently a wood structure, and that  
4           would be replaced with one of these steel structures  
5           that you saw. Either self-weathering or galvanized  
6           steel are the two options.

7                       Does that answer your questions?

8                       MR. ERNST: Yeah, it's just vegetation,  
9           how that would be maintained. Because if it has --  
10          if you're clearing within that right-of-way,  
11          basically all those trees will disappear in the  
12          front part of the property. I don't know how those  
13          would be maintained.

14                      MR. STORM: What -- do you have a  
15          constraint? What are you along? What road are you  
16          along?

17                      MR. ERNST: We're right along Chaska  
18          Boulevard, just along 41 and County Road 10. We're  
19          on the north side right by Farmer's Park, right at  
20          the entrance to Farmer's Park. It's the brick  
21          building that sits there. And, again, the trees,  
22          there's some within -- well, the city right-of-way.  
23          There's some trees that are probably within two or  
24          three feet of the city right-of-way inside on the  
25          property. Then there's another two that are ten



1 feet back from the right-of-way. So you've got a  
2 curve, say, from the curve to the base of the  
3 building, this brick building, is 23 feet. Then  
4 you've got a five-foot boulevard where the high  
5 line -- where the posts are going through right now,  
6 there's a five-foot walk. Then the remaining -- and  
7 the sidewalk is on city property. And from there to  
8 the historical building or the brick building that  
9 we have for offices, it's within 10 or 13 feet,  
10 so -- to the base of the building. And the trees,  
11 there's a couple large trees. There's a locust and  
12 a maple tree that are probably within about ten feet  
13 of that right-of-way. So -- so I'm just curious  
14 whether they will have to come out with this new  
15 alignment or they're going to be just shaved?  
16 They're pretty good-sized trees.

17 MS. TAUBER: Yeah. Yeah. And so, again,  
18 this is very preliminary in terms of our anticipated  
19 alignment. But, again, in the areas of the new  
20 line, where we're requesting a 400-foot route width  
21 within which we'll have that flexibility to take  
22 those things into consideration in the design.

23 MR. ERNST: We'll just have to see --  
24 that's my concerns, questions right now.

25 MR. STORM: Okay. If you wouldn't mind,

1 submit a comment to me, giving me your address and  
2 your concern; and I'll make sure that that is at  
3 least looked at in my environmental report to see --  
4 to pay attention to what that situation is. It does  
5 sound like it's a constraint, and I think it does  
6 warrant us to take a look at it. So if you would  
7 write me a comment within this comment period, I'll  
8 make sure that I have Xcel look at that area, as I'm  
9 writing my environmental report; and maybe we can  
10 look at if there is any mitigation there, what can  
11 we do.

12 MR. ERNST: Very good. Okay. I will do  
13 that. Thank you very much.

14 MR. STORM: Any other questions?

15 Yes, sir.

16 MR. SMIGELSKI: Bob Smigelski. Bob, as  
17 you'd expect. Smigelski, S-M-I-G-E-L-S-K-I. I'm at  
18 the Cascade/Tupelo Way where the power lines  
19 currently are. And my question is down the path of  
20 the easement. I want to say it's 25 feet in each  
21 direction of the current power lines. And what  
22 would it go to? Is it 75 feet, so 35 feet -- well,  
23 37.5 feet each way? As well as is the priority of  
24 the routing or the choice down the path of trying to  
25 go down the highest traffic or travel routes over

1       going between two houses where there isn't even a  
2       road, which is currently where the power line is?  
3       So two questions, one about the easement, what it  
4       would be changing to; and one down the path of  
5       choosing priority for paths. Is it the least loss?  
6       Is it the least cost of creating new poles?

7               MR. STORM: Okay. I'll take them one at  
8       a time, and I'll have Xcel correct me if I'm wrong.  
9       My understanding is that Xcel is going to attempt to  
10      stay within the easements that they have; but when  
11      that isn't possible, they may have to expand out to  
12      75 feet.

13             Is that correct?

14             MS. TAUBER: Correct.

15             MR. STORM: Okay. Then your second  
16      question about -- I think what your second question  
17      is getting at is how are the route and the route  
18      alternatives evaluated or even alignment  
19      alternatives in this case, because it sounds like  
20      what you're talking about would be within that  
21      200-foot route, and then where does that line go and  
22      how do you move that line around.

23             MR. SMIGELSKI: Not within the 200 feet,  
24      but the selection of the route, whether or not you'd  
25      follow Highway 212, old 212, as opposed to routing

1 through neighborhoods?

2 MR. STORM: Okay. Well, I'll probably  
3 let Xcel answer for this specific project. For --  
4 for us, what we do is we look at the impacts of a  
5 proposed route. And those impacts are not only the  
6 environment, wetlands; a change not only going  
7 through a wetland, but are you changing from a  
8 forested wetland to a nonforested wetland. But  
9 there are also houses; how close are you to the  
10 house, are you -- how many individual parcels are  
11 you impacting. So there's many aspects that we try  
12 to account for so that when we present the record in  
13 front of the Commission, the Commission can see what  
14 the cost and benefits -- the cost being the burden  
15 that somebody may have to carry -- of one route to  
16 another.

17 And the situation you bring up is one of  
18 the things that we do here in scoping is if you  
19 have -- if you're along a segment of that route and  
20 you believe -- and even in the case where there's an  
21 existing line you believe that that existing line  
22 probably wasn't sited the best that it could have  
23 been way back when or the built environment has  
24 changed around it and you think a route  
25 alternative -- and it doesn't have to be an

1 alternative to the whole route; it can just be a  
2 segment -- you can say, look, you're going through  
3 something I think is sensitive from mile marker 5 to  
4 mile marker 9, for that I would -- Bill, I would  
5 like you to evaluate, instead of cutting my property  
6 or cutting between -- turning, going up this road or  
7 down that road and back down the road and then  
8 continuing on to the route. And we would look at  
9 that as an alternative route segment. And we do  
10 evaluate them very often in these projects.

11 So what I would encourage you to do is,  
12 if you think the proposed route presents a problem  
13 in just a specific area, sit down, look at the area,  
14 and ask me to -- you have to bring it forth, though.  
15 You can't just say, Bill, look at alternatives. You  
16 have to say, Bill, I've looked at this, I've looked  
17 at street maps; I think going up Fifth Street, down  
18 April, back down, you know, Tenth Street makes sense  
19 to avoid this area because this area is special for  
20 whatever reason you may feel it's special.

21 Now the -- since we're in the alternative  
22 process -- so I encourage you to do that, to bring  
23 those things forward.

24 MR. SMIGELSKI: I will.

25 MR. STORM: Now, the alternative process,

1       since the Applicant only has to put one route on the  
2       table, they have their own reasoning why they pick a  
3       route. And on a rebuild project, to me, not  
4       prejudging anything, it just seems pretty, well,  
5       we're going to put it where the one is now, you  
6       know. In other cases where there aren't existing  
7       lines, it is very common for utilities to look at  
8       and for other people putting alternative routes on  
9       the table to look at natural linear features, an old  
10      railroad bed, a road, try to follow other  
11      infrastructure. That's pretty common in siting  
12      these linear infrastructures, you know.

13               So that probably is -- I would say that  
14      probably does rise to the surface when a utility is  
15      looking to go from point A to point B, how do we get  
16      there; they look at the natural and the built  
17      environment and what are the natural linear features  
18      there, whether it be an old railroad bed or a  
19      highway or a property line, fence line between two  
20      40s, things like that. But for specifics for how  
21      Xcel came up with this project, I have to let Xcel  
22      speak.

23               MR. LEHMAN: Sage.

24               MS. TAUBER: Sure. Yeah, with regard to  
25      your first question about the width of the

1 easements, like I mentioned, we're proposing to stay  
2 within the existing width as much as possible. So  
3 we'll minimize the need to expand the right-of-way  
4 as much as possible, including through Cascade and  
5 Tupelo Way.

6 With regard to the route alignment  
7 specifically, we've chosen to rebuild in the  
8 existing alignment to minimize the need for  
9 acquiring new right-of-way. Also minimizes the --  
10 minimizes new environmental impacts, additional  
11 impact to landowners. So we've chosen a route that  
12 utilizes existing right-of-way as much as possible.

13 MR. SMIGELSKI: I guess one other  
14 question. The railroad bed that used to exist just  
15 to the south of old 212 is -- I don't know who owns  
16 that right-of-way or -- the tracks were removed --  
17 tracks were removed going through downtown.

18 MR. GEIGER: It's the area in downtown  
19 that's been rerouted.

20 MS. TAUBER: Oh, in down -- the area  
21 downtown you're talking about, this segment here  
22 (indicating)?

23 MR. SMIGELSKI: The railroad bed I think  
24 is just south of old 212 that used to parallel it  
25 and then cross downtown Chaska probably 50 feet

1 south of old 212. I think that's Chaska Boulevard.

2 MS. TAUBER: Is it this segment here,  
3 Dan?

4 MR. GEIGER: No, no. There's another  
5 piece that parallels Chaska Boulevard. That's the  
6 piece you're referring to.

7 MR. SMIGELSKI: Right.

8 MS. TAUBER: I'm not sure I caught your  
9 question about that.

10 MR. SMIGELSKI: I guess considered and --  
11 I don't know who owns that right or the rights to  
12 the railroad bed that was -- that used to exist  
13 there.

14 MS. TAUBER: We're looking at -- yeah, a  
15 portion of the reroute here (indicating) would  
16 utilize some of the existing old railroad. But I'm  
17 not personally familiar with, I don't think, the  
18 segment that you're talking about. So I don't know  
19 that I can speak to that.

20 Dan, are you --

21 MR. SMIGELSKI: I think that's probably  
22 the same segment. I think it carries down all the  
23 way on down to Carver --

24 MS. TAUBER: Further south.

25 MR. SMIGELSKI: -- further paralleling.



1 MS. TAUBER: Yes. That was not part of  
2 the route that we evaluated at the time. But like  
3 Bill mentioned, this is certainly an opportunity, if  
4 you see an alternative route that you would like  
5 evaluated --

6 MR. SMIGELSKI: Who normally owns those  
7 routes or properties?

8 MR. STORM: The old railroad?

9 MR. SMIGELSKI: Yes.

10 MR. STORM: It depends. Sometimes it was  
11 seeded back to landowners, and sometimes it's just  
12 held in trust. It varies along the area. But if  
13 you believe that the concept that you have in mind,  
14 let's look at this old railroad bed and see what it  
15 does and let's evaluate that, I would encourage you  
16 to bring that forth to me. But you also have to  
17 bring forth your reasons why. You have to say,  
18 well, I think this is -- I think following this old  
19 railroad bed might alleviate, and then X is for you  
20 to answer. What are you trying to -- what burden or  
21 impact are you trying to mitigate with this  
22 alternative route? Why do you want the alternative  
23 route?

24 MR. SMIGELSKI: Okay.

25 MR. STORM: It can't just be I don't want

1           it on my property. We get plenty of them, but --

2                   MR. SMIGELSKI: Okay. Understand.

3                   MR. STORM: Okay.

4                   MR. SMIGELSKI: Thank you.

5                   MR. STORM: Anybody else?

6                   Okay. Remember, you have until  
7           October 12th to comment to me. And, again, routes,  
8           if you -- when you get home and you look at the maps  
9           and you look at the old railroad bed and you think,  
10          oh, yeah, that might work, bring it forth. Tell  
11          me --

12                   MR. SMIGELSKI: So I guess one last  
13          question is, you know, the burdens that are  
14          existing, whether it's one you've realized, whether  
15          it's one the power companies have realized, is that  
16          logged somewhere such that everybody is  
17          knowledgeable of what the current burdens are?

18                   MR. STORM: Yeah, in the environmental  
19          report what we will do is we will look at the  
20          proposed project, which is going along the existing  
21          line, and we will look at how many parcels, how  
22          far -- what are the -- how far are the houses away  
23          from the line. That's what you're talking about  
24          burden?

25                   MR. SMIGELSKI: But before October 12th,

1           before submitting the --

2                       MR. STORM: No, no.

3                       MR. SMIGELSKI: -- recommendations to  
4 show that what it would alleviate, right, is that  
5 common knowledge for the project such that it's  
6 shared for everyone to see?

7                       MR. STORM: I'm not sure if I'm  
8 understanding what you're asking me. If -- if you  
9 as a property owner or as a concerned citizen look  
10 at the proposed route and you see a spot on that  
11 route that is a problem for whatever reason -- it's  
12 too close to historical property, it's going to go  
13 through -- it goes through an apple orchard --  
14 whatever that problem is that is specific to your  
15 interest and you say, well, I'd like to avoid that,  
16 so you say -- so you look at an alternative route  
17 segment that loops around that or goes underneath it  
18 or around it, that's what I would need you to lay  
19 out for me: Here's my issue, here's what -- here's  
20 the -- here's the burden I'm trying to get around --  
21 you know, state what the burden of the proposed  
22 project is -- and then here's my alternative to that  
23 that I want you to evaluate. Does that make sense  
24 to you?

25                       MR. SMIGELSKI: It makes sense. Although

1 the alternative choice, right?

2 MR. STORM: Yeah.

3 MR. SMIGELSKI: Unless there's 52 items  
4 or areas of concern that are documented for everyone  
5 to see on different areas or segments, choosing the  
6 alternative route is by chance, as opposed to by  
7 design. If it's clear what 30 areas are impacted  
8 not only by myself but by my neighbors, by the  
9 people on the route trying to select an alternative  
10 route, if it's not known what the burdens are for  
11 others, you're just throwing a dart at the board,  
12 saying, well, I hope this is better.

13 MR. STORM: I see there's definitely an  
14 aspect of that. But the whole point of the  
15 environmental document, which comes after the  
16 scoping, is to look at the impacts both to the built  
17 and natural environment of the proposal and then  
18 look at the same impacts and burdens of any proposed  
19 routes or route segments that were put on the table  
20 so that when the Commission -- when it's laid in  
21 front of the Commission as, okay, you agreed that a  
22 transmission line needs to be built, now let's pick  
23 a route, so they can weigh the house counts, the  
24 tree counts, the wetlands verse -- the forested  
25 wetland verse the open grasslands, wetlands, you

1 know.

2 Sounds to me like the information you  
3 want won't come until we start evaluating those  
4 alternative routes. And to a certain extent, you're  
5 going to draw an alternative route or alternative  
6 route segment. And, yeah, you don't know what new  
7 burdens you're going to create, but that's part of  
8 what the environmental report does. And I don't  
9 think you need to know everybody else's burden to  
10 come up with a scheme that will alleviate yours.

11 MR. SMIGELSKI: But in order to come up  
12 with a suggested route that might be acceptable, it  
13 would be helpful to know what the least path of  
14 resistance would be or least impact would be.

15 MR. STORM: Of the new route?

16 MR. SMIGELSKI: Suggested route. So I  
17 suggest a route. I don't know what the other, you  
18 know, 29 other burdens are.

19 MR. STORM: For that new route; is that  
20 what you're saying?

21 MR. SMIGELSKI: For the new route or to  
22 pick a route of least resistance, I'd just be --

23 MR. STORM: That's what the environmental  
24 document is for, to look at a route that a citizen  
25 puts on the table and compare the impacts to that

1 route -- of that route or route segment to the  
2 proposed. I mean, so it's hard to know what those  
3 impacts are going to be until we do an assessment of  
4 them. Are we connecting at all?

5 MR. SMIGELSKI: Yeah, I'm just saying  
6 that there were no one's right, call it just a  
7 database or, you know, matrix of what the burdens  
8 are, you know, either mapped out that are currently  
9 known, you know, people have expressed right the  
10 area of concern and try and understand what would be  
11 the most efficient route of fewest burdens.

12 MR. STORM: I don't know any other way to  
13 get at it than what we have, is where a citizen or  
14 local unit of government will put an alternative  
15 route or route segment on the table, and then we  
16 evaluate that route with the other one.

17 MR. SMIGELSKI: Fair enough.

18 MR. STORM: Any other comments,  
19 questions?

20 Well, remember, you have until  
21 October 12th to get your either issues or the  
22 alternatives that you want me to look at --  
23 alternative routes or alternative route segment that  
24 you want me to look at in by October 12th. And I  
25 appreciate everybody coming out. It's important

1           that people participate. This is a very good  
2           program and it works very well. And understand that  
3           I as a staff member, I know the infrastructure that  
4           we build for our society results in members of our  
5           society carrying a burden. And what we try to do is  
6           pick the path that has the less burden and the less  
7           number.

8                       MR. SMIGELSKI: So I guess one final  
9           question I would have is just on the line of, if the  
10          path is 10 or 20 percent longer, you know, is one of  
11          the main concerns the efficiency of carrying voltage  
12          or is that just a moot point, the equipment is  
13          plenty capable of handling the losses, the  
14          distances?

15                     MR. STORM: If we're looking at a  
16          ten-mile route and people put 80-mile route  
17          alternatives on the table, one of the factors that  
18          is looked at among all the others is what's the cost  
19          of the project. And if you just quadrupled the cost  
20          of the project, that is going to be a factor. I'm  
21          not saying -- because I'm not the one who puts the  
22          weight on the factor; that's for the Commission to  
23          do. But we have had situations where alternative  
24          routes have been proposed that were longer and they  
25          were actually selected. So it does happen.

1 MR. SMIGELSKI: Thank you.

2 MR. STORM: Well, thanks, everybody. I  
3 appreciate it. And my card's on the table. Call me  
4 anytime.

5 (Proceedings concluded at 7:30 p.m.)

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